

## **National Black MBAs welcomed**

August 22, 2005

Mayor Ray Nagin welcomed the national and local leaders of the National Black MBA Association (NBMBA) to New Orleans last Wednesday during a special private reception at the Marriott Hotel.

Nagin, along with Entergy and Xavier University, extended special Louisiana greetings to Barbara Thomas, the association's president and CEO during a gathering that honored the prestigious group of black businessmen and women who will convene in New Orleans this fall.

"We are delighted to be bringing our 27th annual conference and exposition to New Orleans," Thomas said. "We're pleased to know that our host city is working hard to ensure our attendees and conference partners have a most enjoyable time during their visit."

Thomas is expecting some 11,000 business professionals, recruiters, executives, industry leaders, entrepreneurs and students to return to New Orleans' Ernest N. Morial Convention Center October 11th-16th for the annual conference themed, "Leading with Passion, Purpose & Power." The event will focus on employment opportunities, career and leadership development and education. Some 370 members of the Fortune 500 are also slated to attend the Career Fair and Expo, an annual highlight of the convention, where they aggressively pursue and network with the burgeoning pool of talented candidates.

Besides the obvious career networking opportunities, attendees will be exposed to some of the nation's foremost thought leaders, industry experts and new business technologies, issues and programs. Some \$300,000 will also be awarded in scholarships and gifts to exceptional undergraduate and graduate students.

Attendees will also find time to socialize and enjoy New Orleans' expansive entertainment offerings. A Mardi Gras-style parade is scheduled to celebrate down Canal Street on the conference's opening night, a special gala concert is on tap by perennial favorites Frankie Beverly and Maze along with a special NFL tailgate party for that weekend's Saints game at the Superdome.

Last year's NBMBA conference in Houston sold out some 3,300 rooms and infused some \$15 million dollars into the local economy. Thomas expects this year in New Orleans to be even bigger.

"We are so positive New Orleans is a premier destination for our conference that we have already booked the convention center for a return visit in 2009," Thomas said.

This year's conference co-chairs Nagin, Entergy New Orleans President and CEO Dan Packer and Xavier President Dr. Norman Francis will fete the group, several of their corporate partners and leaders from the Loyola University, Louisiana State University, Tulane University and University of New Orleans business schools.

Major sponsors of the NBMBA conference include: American Airlines, Black Enterprise, Citigroup, The Coca Cola Company, Coors, DaimlerChrysler, Dell, Delphi, Ford Motor Company, GM, Hewlett-Packard, Home Depot, IBM, Intel, Marriott, Mars, Microsoft, PepsiCo, Pitney Bowes, Sprint, Verizon and Walt Disney.

Celebrating its 35th anniversary this year, the National Black MBA Association is dedicated to creating partnerships and opportunities that result in intellectual and economic wealth in the African- American

community. With more than 7,500 members and 39 local chapters, the association represents 100,000 MBA graduates across the United States.

For more information on the NMBBAA or the 27th Annual Conference and Expo, please visit [www.nmbaa.org](http://www.nmbaa.org).